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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPLS](#) [EC](#)

SUBJECT: CORREA'S MOVEMENT IN STRIKING RANGE OF A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY MAJORITY

REF: QUITO 2134

Classified By: DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION JEFFERSON T. BROWN FOR REASON 1.
4 (D)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Ecuador's two top polling firms differ on how close President Rafael Correa's Alianza PAIS movement is to winning a majority of Constituent Assembly seats on September 30. Whether or not Alianza PAIS alone gets the necessary 66 seats to command a majority, it is likely to control the Assembly in coalition with other leftist parties.

The opposition Patriotic Society Party and PRIAN are also running strongly, but well behind Alianza PAIS. (End Summary)

AN ALIANZA PAIS MAJORITY?

¶2. (C) The confidence President Correa exhibited during his September 12 meeting with the Ambassador (Reftel) was borne out by results from one of Ecuador's most reputable polling firms. The head of the firm told us privately that Correa's popularity jumped back up to 72 percent in mid-September. The firm projected that Correa's Alianza PAIS (Proud and Sovereign Fatherland Alliance) movement would win 66 of the Assembly's 130 seats, an increase from the 54 it estimated in August. If this projection were to prove accurate, Alianza PAIS would have a majority of the Assembly's 130 seats and be able to approve Assembly actions on its own.

¶3. (C) Another reputable polling firm, however, predicted that Alianza PAIS would fall short of a majority. It projected the movement will win 42-51 seats in 20 provinces, which leaves it under the required 66 even if it gets all 10 seats in the remaining two provinces and overseas. Both polls have a significant margin of error given the large number of candidates and complex process for assigning seats (see Septel).

¶4. (SBU) Among the opposition parties, the Patriotic Society Party (PSP) of former President Lucio Gutierrez is expected to place second with perhaps 17-20 seats, far behind Alianza PAIS. It is unclear what positions the PSP will take in the Assembly, aside from core campaign tenets such as maintaining dollarization. Two parties further to the right and strongly opposed to the government -- former presidential candidate Alvaro Noboa's Institutional Renewal and National Action Party (PRIAN) and the Social Christian Party (PSC) -- may also pick up 10 to 18 seats combined. No other party or movement is expected to gain more than one to eight seats.

COALITION CALCULATIONS

¶5. (SBU) If PAIS does not win a majority, it could still be in a position to control the Assembly with the support of a

small number of leftist parties such as the Popular Democratic Movement (MPD) and the Ethics and Democracy Network (RED).

¶6. (SBU) It remains to be seen whether PAIS would choose to act on the basis of a narrow majority or try to extend its coalition-building to the center-left Ecuadorian Roldosist Party (PRE) and the newly-formed alliance of eleven leftist parties and movements (five of which are running candidates).

The center-left Democratic Left (ID) is another possible target for coalition-building, but it will likely be more difficult to win over since it is more critical of Correa.

¶7. (C) Of course party allegiances in Ecuador are fleeting and corruption is always a possibility. Some of the Assembly members elected under the banners of PSP, PRIAN, and others might well decide to throw their support to Alianza PAIS if it controls the Assembly, particularly if financial incentives are offered. Similarly, the opposition parties may offer payments to try to bring members of leftist parties over to their side to block government proposals.

¶8. (C) Even if Alianza PAIS wins a majority, the unity of the bloc cannot be taken for granted. Alianza PAIS is composed of diverse groups, some on the extreme left and others quite pragmatic. Keeping Alianza PAIS together may prove a challenge.

COMMENT

¶9. (SBU) There is no question but that Alianza PAIS will be in the lead in the September 30 Constituent Assembly elections. The questions are how large a lead, how the rest of the field shakes out, and what that means for coalition building and Ecuadorians' hopes for a better future.

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